

2007 Amherst Police Report

The year 2007 was another busy year for the men and women of the Amherst Police Department. The department successfully recruited and hired a new officer to fill the last remaining vacancy. After going through a comprehensive selection and background process, Officer P. Derek Mahoney began employment in August. Officer Mahoney spent the Fall attending 14 weeks of police academy training. After completing several additional weeks of field training, Officer Mahoney was deployed to full patrol duties.

Over the year, two promotions took place which has allowed the department to return to its original organizational structure. About a year ago, in December of 2006, Officer Ciampoli was promoted to the rank of sergeant in the patrol division. Effective February 2008, Sergeant Brace has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, in charge of Operations. In that position, he will direct the patrol arm of the department, in addition to other responsibilities. Both officers have displayed the aptitude and ability to provide the supervision and leadership needed to maintain a professional police department.

The department also acquired some significant new equipment at very little cost to the Town, to include six new portable radios valued at \$18,000. The radios were part of a federally funded communications grant administered by the New Hampshire Department of Safety. Additionally, the department acquired new electronic packages for all the marked cruisers at very little cost to the Town. These packages, obtained under the University of New Hampshire Project-54 program, include emergency lighting, siren packages, mobile data terminals, and hands-free software. In addition to the benefit of replacing aging equipment, the new packages allow officers to control radios, lights and sirens via voice command rather than manual switching, providing greater safety. The portable radios and Project-54 equipment total approximately \$60,000 in value, and cost the town approximately \$2,500.

In August the department and Officer Piotrowski had a scare when he was struck by a car on Route 101. Officer Piotrowski was on foot, in the midst of a car stop on the side of the highway when an oncoming vehicle crossed the center of the roadway and struck him from behind. Although the impact was enough to vault him through the air several feet, remarkably Officer Piotrowski was not seriously injured. However, the incident certainly serves as a reminder of the dangers of the job and the need for constant vigilance toward safety.

Unfortunately, the year also included three fatalities in two separate accidents on Route 101 and Route 13. In April, a vehicle traveling on Route 101, well in excess of the speed limit, struck three other cars, resulting in the tragic death of the driver and passenger of the speeding vehicle. Less than a month later, a single car left the roadway on Route 13 and rolled over causing the death of the driver. These incidents, as well as the second year in a row of significant Spring flooding, however, did demonstrate the proficiency of the Town's police, fire, EMS and Public Works departments in working very well together. The spirit of team work, coupled with the improved communications interoperability provided by the Town's emergency dispatch center, has proven very valuable to this town.

As we look into the future, I expect that the department will be researching and pursuing the need for additional manpower. The addition of several hundred thousand square feet of retail space along the Route 101-A corridor over the last two years has increased the demands on the patrol division of the department. Additionally, the possible benefits of adding a canine patrol to the department seem obvious and worth researching further.

Although the department statistics indicate a sizeable increase in accidents over the year (15%), and car stops (5%), arrests and criminal reports are down. These two downtrends are more a result of procedural changes than actual decreases. Because some of the town's larger retailers have changed internal investigative procedures, fewer thefts and fraudulent transactions are being reported than in previous years and the statistics reflect this change.

Our special programs, such as the bicycle patrol, motorcycle patrol, and school resource officers, continue to be popular and

helpful in addressing the community's needs and concerns regarding traffic and school safety issues. We will continue to use these resources throughout the coming years, in addition to trying new and innovative ideas to address the concerns of the community. We also value your suggestions, criticisms and input, and encourage you to call, e-mail or stop in at any time.

As in the past, our goal will be to continue providing the highest quality policing available at the lowest possible cost to the Town. Given the excellence our staff brings to their jobs every day, and the continued support of the community, I look forward to meeting this goal.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the citizens of Amherst, as well as the town employees for your continued support of the police department.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Lyon

Chief of Police